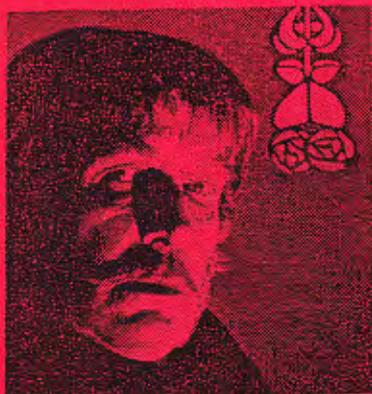


**THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES**  
GB 1971; Cert. X; 94 mins.

Director: Robert Fuest  
Photography: Norman Warwick  
Make-up: Trevor Crole-Rees

Starring:

Vincent Price....Dr. Anton Phibes  
Joseph Cotten....Dr. Vesalius  
Hugh Griffith....Rabbi  
Terry-Thomas.....Dr. Longstreet  
Virginia North...Vulnavia  
Peter Gilmore....Dr. Kitaj  
Peter Jeffrey....Inspector Trout  
Susan Travers....Nurse Allen



*Vincent Price as Dr Phibes*

**ABOMINABLE (adj.)**

**detestable, odious;  
morally or physically  
loathsome; unpleasant.**

# DR PHIBES



Vincent Price is...



also starring  
**Hugh Griffith**  
**Terry-Thomas**

and  
**Joseph Cotten**

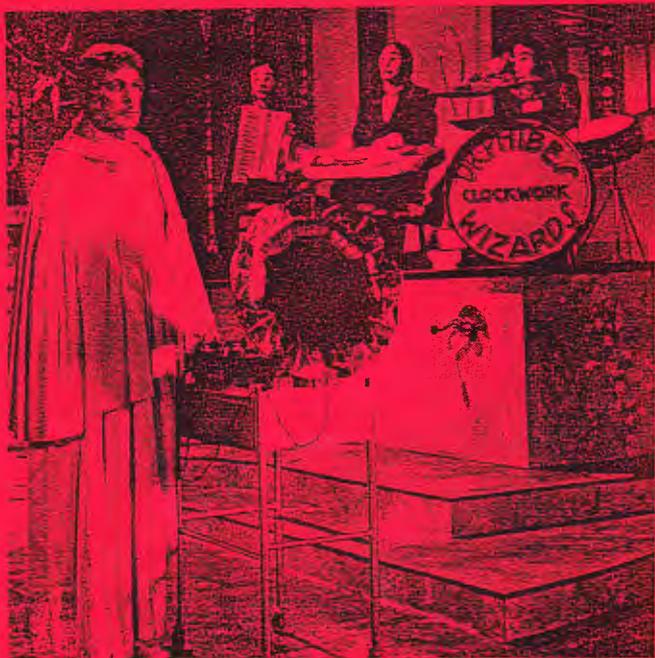
and introducing  
**Virginia North**  
as "Vulnavia"

screenplay by  
**JAMES WHITON**  
from an original story by  
**WILLIAM GOLDSTEIN and  
JAMES WHITON**  
producer  
**LOUIS M. HEYWARD**  
executive producer  
**JAMES H. NICHOLSON and  
SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF**  
directed by  
**ROBERT FUEST**

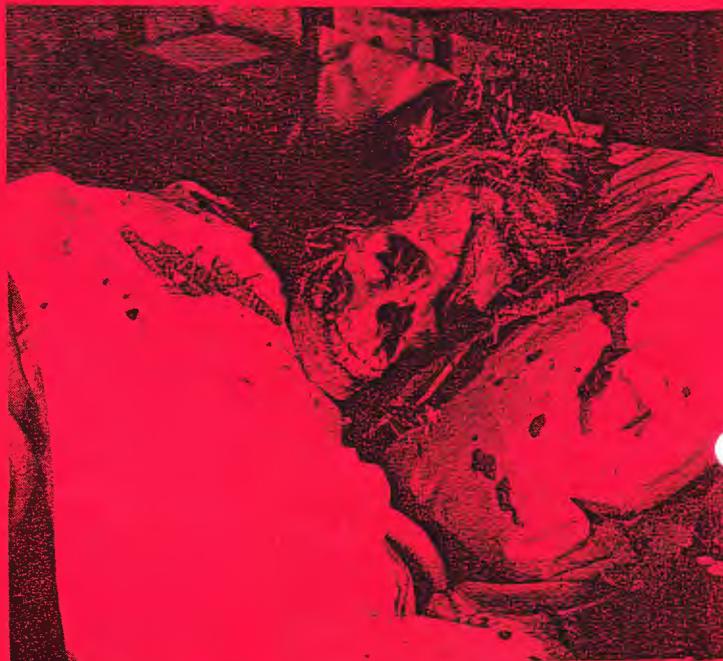
Remember those Saturday nights in the 1970's, when Jimmy Hill's beard on 'Match of the Day' was invariably followed by more horror, in the form of a Hammer feature or, on a particularly good night, a Vincent Price shocker? 'The Abominable Dr. Phibes' was my all-time favourite in this late nite slot, largely because of its tongue-in-cheek approach, something that is all too often absent from today's crop of poor imitations.

Vincent Price displays each of the required attributes of abomination in the title role of Dr Phibes, a horribly disfigured musical genius who sets out to inflict ancient Egyptian curses, - you know, boils, locusts, that sort of thing - on the nine members of the medical team who failed to save the life of his wife several years earlier. Conveniently, he is thought to be dead following a car crash, hence the horrible disfigurement; therefore, it takes the police, led by the stolid, (and splendidly named), Inspector Trout, some time to grasp the significance of a seemingly unconnected bizarre sequence of deaths afflicting the medical profession and even longer to guess their perpetrator. However, once Joseph Cotten arrives on the scene, (as an intended victim), the net gradually tightens around Phibes and his voluptuous assistant-in-crime, Vulnavia (Virginia North); but, can they be foiled in time?

The King of Camp Horror, Vincent Price is, of course, completely at home with this material; indeed, he subsequently reprised the role in 'Dr. Phibes Rises Again' and also in the similar 'Theatre of Blood'. He is ably supported by many familiar faces from the British B-Picture stable, such as Terry-Thomas, Hugh Griffith and Peter (Capt. Onedin) Gilmore. But perhaps the real star of the film is Trevor Crole-Rees, whose make-up superbly creates the look of a living corpse for Phibes, without having to resort to buckets of gore.



*Dr. Phibes rehearsing one of his famous candlelit acts*



*The demise of Nurse Allen*

Dr Phibes was, (unfairly, in my humble opinion), criticised on its release in 1971 as being too "flat" and "stagey", but perhaps the reviewers misinterpreted its intentional tackiness as incompetence by director Robert Fuest and his production team. Indeed, the special effects and aforementioned make-up are particularly effective - for instance, how on earth did they train a swarm of locusts to eat Nurse Allen's face away in one take ?

All in all, it's a perfect film to round off the 14th Season on a cheery note: just sit back and enjoy....

IAN SOWERBY

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